



Photo: Bob Stevenson

## Troop Leading Procedures at Company Level: ...Delegation is the key to success

by Captain Mike Henderson

How often has a company commander felt that time constantly had the better of him while conducting troop-leading procedures? After personally struggling with this as a tank company commander and after observing six other company commanders at the CMTC utilize six different techniques for managing time, I found some techniques that work well. The most effective involved delegating responsibilities to other key leaders in the unit. Here are some techniques for creating a "staff" from available assets.

**Executive Officer** - The XO writes paragraphs 4 and 5 and portrays the enemy during company rehearsals. In addition, he supervises the terrain model construction or, if the company conducts a mounted rehearsal, the XO commands the "enemy forces." His responsibilities for portraying the enemy are the same as in a wargame: action, reaction, and counter-action. He portrays where the enemy can influence the company and with what weapons systems. He should also have the ability to portray the enemy action that may cause a branch to the company base plan, meanwhile keeping track of both enemy and friendly losses.

The terrain board is constructed to ensure that the commander's intent is met, and reflects the attendees and

amount of daylight for the rehearsal. The terrain board, at a minimum, must include phase lines, checkpoints, battle positions, artillery targets, direct fire control measures, attack-by-fire positions, templated enemy locations, and key/decisive terrain.

If possible, a separate, more detailed terrain model of the objective area can be used for coordinating friendly actions on the objective to mitigate the chances of fratricide. Additionally, the terrain board is ideal for the company CSS rehearsal, led jointly by the XO and the company first sergeant. In performing these duties, the XO better understands how the scheme of maneuver will unfold and also provides the commander with the ability to see his unit from the enemy point of view, and recognize shortcomings in maneuver execution and logistical sustainability.

**Fire Support Officer** - Among the FSO's primary responsibilities are advising the company commander of the capabilities and limitations of his fire support assets and helping the commander refine the task force fire support plan to a company's perspective. In addition, he can also be a very effective assistant S2 if trained properly (the commander still being the primary intelligence officer in the company).

In refining the fire plan, the FSO analyzes terrain, weather, enemy composition, disposition, and capabilities. In

analyzing these factors, the FSO determines the effects of weather on the use of smoke, and on his night sight for the Ground/Vehicular Laser Locator Designator (G/VLLD) and he must consider light data for marking his limited visibility triggers. He also takes into consideration the types of ammunition needed for each target, such as whether to use variable time or time delay fuses.

In addition to FA considerations, the FSO makes a preliminary analysis of how the enemy will influence the friendly scheme of maneuver. He and the company XO, who portrays the enemy in the combined arms rehearsal, can conduct a joint mission analysis/IPB. In the defense, this will assist the FSO in plotting his technical and tactical triggers. So, why not task the FSO to write and brief paragraph 1a of the company operations order? This will provide more time for the commander to spend on COA development. However, during this whole process, the commander and the FSO must communicate with one another to ensure that the commander is fighting the same enemy that the FSO will brief.

**Master Gunner** - The master gunner is the "operations NCO." In addition to his primary duties, the MG is the "CP Meister." He ensures that graphics are reproduced, combat power is tracked, routine reports are submitted, and that the terrain model is constructed IAW the commander's guidance. His primary

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assistants are the command gunners, the medics, and the FIST chief... yes, the FIST chief. In defensive operations, the MG is a superb choice as CINC Dozer. He is the expert in the fire control system, he can recognize when a fighting position is constructed to standard, and he can help advise platoon leaders and tank commanders on employment of each weapons system in support of the scheme of maneuver.

The technique of delegation provides maximum daylight planning time to the platoons. Rarely do company commanders violate the  $\frac{1}{3}$ - $\frac{2}{3}$  rule, but when further analysis of time is conducted (relative to the time of year), we as observer/controllers, find that platoons are forced to issue orders late at night, generally not to standard, and with a low subordinate alertness level. Having said that, if detailed planning by the company commander results in late-night platoon orders, the company commander must provide specific guidance on generic rehearsals conducted

parallel with the company orders process. In performing actions on contact, obstacle reduction, and casualty evacuation drills during daylight hours, the company commander can mitigate the absence of daylight planning time from the platoons. Although, if a daylight combined arms rehearsal at the platoon level is unlikely, then the commander can elect to have all tank commanders, Bradley commanders, and squad leaders present for the company combined arms rehearsal to ensure that everyone understands the plan.

Finally, even on a very compressed timeline, the tank and mechanized infantry company/team can still maximize plan and preparation time if critical tasks are delegated. By specifying reconnaissance, generic rehearsal and assigning operations order areas of responsibility, the commander can maintain his focus on course of action development and not concern himself with performance of parallel tasks. However, the company commander's

ability to delegate the above responsibilities to subordinates is directly based on the training level of the subordinate leaders.

Consequently, unless the company commander has invested time and effort in teaching and rehearsing his subordinates prior to arrival at a CTC or in a combat zone, he takes a chance that he may produce a better product on his own, while taking additional time in doing so.

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